Homophobia in non-heterosexuals and their families

Honors Thesis
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Overview

• Evolutionary Psychology
• Why homophobia
• Current research
• Methods
• Results
• Discussion and conclusion
• Acknowledgements
Evolutionary Psychology

- Darwin (1859)
- Survival of the fittest?
- Fit genes
- Behavioral characteristics
Why Homophobia

- Importance of understanding homophobia
- Evolutionary riddle of sexual orientations
- Kin selection theory (Wilson, 1975)
  - Nieces and nephews
- Imprinting theory (Gallup, 1995)
Homophobia

• Evolutionary advantage?
• Gallup (1995): Measuring discomfort in contact with children

• “Imagine yourself as the parent of a son/daughter who was 8/21 years of age and who had spent the night at a friend’s house. How upset would you be to learn that the friend’s mother/father was homosexual?”
Current research

1. Reproducing Gallup’s 1995 research
   - Age
   - Same-sex pairs vs. opposite-sex pairs
2. Homophobia in non-heterosexual individuals?
3. How do the attitudes of a heterosexual person compare to a non-heterosexual person regarding contact between a child and a gay or lesbian person?
4. Family attitudes towards different sexual orientations
Current Research: Hypotheses

- Ratings younger niece/nephew < Older niece/nephew
- Ratings same-sex pairs < Opposite sex pairs
- Ratings heterosexuals = Ratings non-heterosexuals
- Non-heterosexual participants experience more resistance from their siblings when spending time with real niece(s) and/or nephew(s), than heterosexual participants
  - Quantitative (less time)
  - Qualitative (less receptive)
Methodology: Online Questionnaire

- Closeness to family
- Time spent with nieces and nephews (if available)
- “Imagine yourself as the aunt/uncle of a niece/nephew who was 8/21 years of age and who had spent the night at a friend’s house. How would you feel about learning that the friend’s mother/father was lesbian/gay?”

  Very negative – Negative – Neutral – Positive – Very positive
Methodology

• 138 participants
  – 89 females, 43 males, 6 unknown
  – 50% heterosexual, 8% gay, 6.5% lesbian, and 35.5% other

• Repeated measures ANOVA
Results

• Replication of Gallup (1995)
  – No main age interaction
    • But interaction child’s age and participant’s sex
  – More negative ratings same-sex than opposite sex pairs
• Non-heterosexual had more positive ratings than heterosexual, especially “other” group
• Insufficient data on real life experiences
Discussion and Conclusion

• Study of homophobia is important and needed
• Several predictions of Gallup’s research were replicated, but insufficient evidence
• Self-report, social desirability bias
• Future research focused on family members
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